

# THE LEISURE HOUR.

A FAMILY JOURNAL OF INSTRUCTION AND RECREATION.

"BEHOLD IN THESE WHAT LEISURE HOURS DEMAND,—AMUSEMENT AND TRUE KNOWLEDGE HAND IN HAND."—*Courper.*



LAURA AND MYRTLE.

## LAURA LOFT.

A TALE OF WOMAN'S RIGHTS.

CHAPTER IV.—DORMER HOUSE.

We will now accompany Laura to her friend Myrtle's home. Her reflections on her journey thither were not favourable to her relative at Rosemary Hill. She remembered the time when her aunt had showed her with triumph the great rosemary bush at each corner of the kitchen garden, telling her of the old saying,

No. 1124.—JULY 12, 1873.

"Where the rosemary flourishes the woman rules," and she resented the inconsistency between the opinions she now avowed, and the practice she maintained.

"If she had been educated! There is the evil; women who have natural power cannot use it because they know not how to reason; thus, when she talks of strength governing, she confounds a strong will with a strong mind; mental strength is often trampled on by an arbitrary will. But she is not open to con-

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PRICE ONE PENNY.

viction. I must work on minds unprejudiced, on materials soft and impressible—yes, I *must* work, there is a great work to do!”

Her heart swelled with emotion as she mused, and her uncle's kind expostulation she coldly smiled at. As the chaise drew near to Myrtle's abode other thoughts arose. Would she find the Myrtle of her school days? And would the “dear, kind, indulgent” husband be what she considered a husband ought to be? As to Myrtle, her name was a type of her nature; everybody loved Myrtle, so gentle and loving herself; everybody admired her, so beautiful without any show or high pretension. The Chaldee Targum—(do not let the reader be alarmed, this was Miss Loft's discovery, repeated in laudation of her friend)—says, speaking of Esther the Queen, “they call her Hadassah, because she was just, and those that are just are compared to the myrtle, and as the sweetness of its flowers refreshes and charms, so did the grace and moral dignity of her character attract and win all hearts.”

It was wonderful that she chose Laura Loft as her “particular,” so their school-mates thought; but the truth was that Laura chose her. She had everything to recommend her to the post; enough of mental power to enable her to yield a satisfactory admiration to *her*, and not enough to come into collision with her. She was cheerful without levity, she was beautiful without vanity. She was very humble, and willing always to defer her opinion to that of another when she had reason to doubt; but she was firm as a rock in maintaining it when persuaded she was right. It was equally to be questioned how she allowed herself to be chosen by one so contrary to herself in all things; but it was owing partly to her submissive nature, that could not easily resist, and partly to the need she saw Laura had of a friend, for in the same proportion that she herself was courted and liked, was Miss Loft disliked and shunned. Their friendship had as little real foundation as is too often, most unhappily, found to exist in unions even closer.

It was a matter of still greater surprise when, shortly after leaving school, at a maturer age than that usually attained to by “finished” young ladies, she accepted as a husband a gentleman of a character as different from her own as Laura's was. The other side of the question was debated, too—how could Mr. Davenant, so clever, so above most men (in his own conceit), and so entirely contemptuous as to the capacity or acquirements of most women, choose pretty, simple Myrtle, who claimed to excel in nothing but needlework, had a decided taste for housewifery, and had not the remotest pretension to letters? He, it was argued, should at least have chosen a Madame de Staël, or a Mrs. Somerville, if, even, he could have felt satisfied with either of them; but so it was, that he passed by some very literary young ladies, some very musical young ladies, some young ladies much richer, and who “shone” in society much more brilliantly, and proposed to Myrtle; and Myrtle, without well considering what she did, having no one to advise her, for she was an orphan, accepted him.

To say she did it without well considering it, is to lead to the inference that she did wrong; it must be confessed, without any slur upon Mr. Davenant, that it struck *her* occasionally, before even the honeymoon was over, that she had done wrong. She had sometimes in school-days been sorry that she had allowed

herself to be Laura's chosen friend, but that was a compact that might end with school-days—one that any day might break. So she bore with easy submission her outbreaks of temper and pride; but when now she looked down on her finger, after a manifestation of Mr. Davenant's true but unsuspected character, and saw the pledge of her fealty and obedience “*for ever—till death do us part*,” a pang shot across her heart, and a tear came into her eye. The pang was uncomplained of, and the tear speedily dried.

She had heartily responded to Laura's proposed visit, her generous nature retained nothing of old days but their sunshine. Mr. Davenant, it must be premised, was not sanguine that the visit would lead to all the pleasure that his wife expected; she had expiated on Laura's “knowing so much,” had dwelt on the trouble she gave to the best heads at school, who tried in vain to keep up with her, and how, it was suspected, she occasionally puzzled the masters and professors. Mr. Davenant's reply was usually an ironical smile, or the remark, “Knowledge and wisdom are not the same things; she might know less and be wiser, know more and be foolish.” Finding that her efforts failed to recommend her to her husband, who she felt at times despised or at least slighted her for her inferiority, Myrtle desisted; but hoped that the first interview, or, at least, the first conversation, would secure his respect. Not but what she had a misgiving that there was much truth in the distinction between wisdom and knowledge; she was sure Laura had the second—as to the first? Well, at any rate, she hoped the best of and for her, and gave her a cordial greeting when she came.

The first conversation between Laura and Mr. Davenant produced the opposite result from what his wife had so sanguinely hoped. At its close, he said in his heart, “She is a fool!” and Laura said in hers, “He is a tyrant!”

Laura had been a week with her friend, and they were sitting in a pleasant morning-room that looked out on the garden, Myrtle engaged at a work-frame with gay wools beside her, and Laura holding a book, from which she read extracts occasionally, to enforce her arguments on her favourite subject, which did not meet with the sympathy she desired to see excited in her companion.

“Just fancy, dear! two millions of women out of six, over twenty years of age, in England, who have neither husbands, children, nor fortune! How are these to be supported?”

Here Miss Loft looked up, and Myrtle said, gravely, “I am sure, dear, I cannot think how they are to be supported.”

“It *must* be thought of, and thought of to purpose,” said Laura, slightly sighing, and looking rather despairingly at her friend's “got-up” expression of concern, which was now subsiding into one of real interest in the matching of a shade in wool.

“Yes, dear, I am sure it must,” said Myrtle, as there was a pause, and she felt it was her turn to speak.

“Do you remember the day on which M. de la Plate lectured on ‘Civil Rights’?” said Laura.

“Yes, dear, I do; it was on a dancing day. I always wondered that we should have those long lectures on dancing days, because they took up so much time, and really it was very hard to get through everything. Let me see. It was on a Thursday, and my time-table for Thursday was—nine to

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ten, history; ten to half-past, French conversation; half-past ten to eleven, calisthenics; eleven to twelve—"

"Yes, yes," interrupted Laura, rather impatiently, "I wanted to know, but I don't suppose it is likely, if you remember the lecture itself, or any of the remarks made in it."

Myrtle looked as if trying to bring up the ghost of even one word of it, but at last replied, "Really, dear, I can't say that I do remember it at all; but I know all the girls were dreadfully tired of it, except Miss Grater, that tall girl with red hair that nobody liked; and Mrs. Tremayne and Mdlle. Dueroix, who were the President ladies, yawned, and—"

Again Laura interrupted. "Do you remember what Miss Grater said?"

"No." Myrtle knew only that it was praise.

"She is now educating for medicine," said Laura.

"For what?" exclaimed Myrtle.

"For medicine; she hopes to begin practice very soon."

"What! To be a doctor?" asked Myrtle, with an incredulous smile.

"Yes, why not? Have you never heard of lady professors of medicine, law, and science?" Laura asked in turn.

"Ye-e-e-s—I have heard of them; I heard Carlton and my cousin Charles Leporel talking about it last week; but I had no idea I should ever hear of any girl known to me turning into a doctor. I should as soon have expected to hear of her turning into a—"

No case could have adequately conveyed the idea of Myrtle's wonderment, so her voice died away and she bent her head again to her frame.

"Myrtle, dear," said Laura, "how are the two millions of women unprovided for to live, if all honourable callings are to be closed against them? I see that your feelings recoil from this step, but tell me—"

"Myrtle, are you ready?" exclaimed Mr. Davenant, looking in at the door, and hastily retreating after a slight recognition of Miss Loft. "Say no," whispered that lady, with a grim smile, while Myrtle hastily pushed away her frame and ran off, promising a quick return.

Laura, with a shrug of contempt, took a book from the table and began turning over the leaves, when a noise at the window attracted her; she looked up and saw a gentleman in the act of raising the sash. In a few seconds he stood by her side, and making a cavalier-like bow, said, "Miss Loft, I presume?"

Laura returned a gesture of assent.

"I am happy to introduce Myrtle's cousin, Charles Leporel," said that gentleman, with another bow.

Laura said she had heard Myrtle speak of Mr. Leporel.

"If only half as flatteringly as I have heard her speak of Miss Loft, I need not any stronger recommendation to favour," said the gentleman, with another bow, more deferential than the rest.

Laura was divided in her feelings; homage was always pleasant, but this was rather too undisguised; the stiff movement of acknowledgment with which she received it betrayed her feeling, and immediately Mr. Leporel felt checked, and that his usual style would not be acceptable to his cousin's stately friend. He made, in a careless manner, several observations relative to the place, and alluded to the delight with which Myrtle had been looking forward to her old schoolfellow's visit. His manner was so easy, so free

at once from restraint and undue familiarity, that Laura became better impressed, and, by degrees, a pretty intimate *tête-à-tête* was in progress between them.

Mr. Leporel had a way, like most artists, and he was one, of fixing his eyes, not in a way to give offence, on the face of the person with whom he conversed; and during the conversation now passing, his laughing eyes (for a laugh always lurked in them) were exploring every line and tint of the countenance before him. Laura felt it, and it made her uneasy; he might be admiring her, he might be criticising her to disadvantage; she was relieved, though on the whole she was pleased with her new companion, when Myrtle returned with many apologies for her desertion.

"Oh, Charles," she cried, seeing her cousin, "I am so glad to see you for one thing; tell me, ought this border to be green and gold or purple and gold? Which will be best with the scarlet?"

"What is it for?" asked Mr. Leporel, advancing to the table and looking as fixedly at the work-frame as he had done at Laura's face.

"A banner-screen," said Myrtle, watching intently for the verdict he would pass.

"Green is rest, purple is royalty; the question is whether rest or royalty suits best with a banner."

"Oh, does that signify? I thought you could tell me what colours would go best with the middle," said Myrtle, rather troubled at having a new difficulty laid upon her, whereupon Mr. Leporel and Laura exchanged smiles; while the consultation was going on, Mr. Davenant, who had heard of Mr. Leporel's arrival, entered the room.

"Charles," he said, "is this true about Beverley?"

"Too true; he has left his family wholly unprovided for."

"How is that? his wife had a large fortune, and he had a good appointment."

"Yes, but contrary to advice, there was no settlement made, so the fortune is gone, and of course the appointment and its income died with him."

"But did he save nothing?"

Mr. Leporel shook his head.

"Nor insure his life?"

Another shake of the head.

"Then a widow and six girls are thrown on the liberality of the British public! Such conduct is indefensible!"

"Six girls!" inquired Laura, with interest, while Myrtle looked shocked and turned from her banner-screen to listen.

"Yes; that is a case for *you*, Miss Loft; if you can turn some of them into boys, and so make them independent members of society, it will be a help to their friends," said Mr. Davenant, somewhat sarcastically.

"I don't see why they must be boys to become independent members of society," replied Laura; "train them as boys should be trained, and the effect will be the same."

"There are six out of the two million of women you were speaking of this morning, Laura—seven, counting the mother," said Myrtle, endeavouring to avert the answer that might come from her husband, whose contemptuous glance promised nothing very pleasant.

"I don't believe that a Beverley, boy or girl, unless trained very differently from father or mother, will effect self-maintenance," said Mr. Leporel. "Clara



has gone to old Mr. Gray to try and soften his heart towards them, but if he really is what people say, a stone wrapped up in parchment, I am afraid that even she will fail. Do you know him?"

"Gray? he is by repute an upright man and sound lawyer; I know no more of him than that," said Mr. Davenant.

"He was left sole guardian of Mrs. Beverley, who married against his will, and without his knowledge. Afterwards he vainly endeavoured to get her fortune settled on herself and her children; then he tried to make poor Beverley insure his life; having failed in all, he turned his back upon them in wrath,—and an angry lawyer is rather a forlorn hope," said Mr. Leporel.

"They must go out as governesses. Of course they can do *that*," said Myrtle; "but it will be a painful change for them, poor things."

"It should not be so," said Laura, "and would not be but for the false views of English society; a *man* may be anything, do anything; provided he makes a stand for himself, grows rich and throws off dependence on others, he will be accepted, honoured, applauded. But let a *woman* come forward to bear the burthen laid on her by necessity, and she loses caste; she must submit to the pity, the patronage, the neglect, and contempt of the class that employs her, raised above her in many instances merely by pounds, shillings, and pence."

"I think," said Mr. Leporel, "that depends much upon the woman; some could command respect in any position."

Laura might have taken this as an indirect compliment, for he fixed his eyes on her very meaningly as he spoke, but she showed no consciousness, and the conversation returned to the subject of the Beverleys and what could be done for them.

"Clara is right, she generally is," said Mr. Leporel, "the present system of female education is very deficient."

"Oh! that is just the 'cant' cry of the day," said Mr. Davenant, contemptuously; "what are women the better for being smattered with philosophy? Our grandmothers did well enough that had no pretensions beyond knowing how to keep house and take care of a family."

"I deny that, asking your pardon," said Mr. Leporel; "if you look into history, as given more especially in biography, you will find that among our grandmothers there were women who shone in mind with the purest lustre. Religion and philosophy, in defiance of your sarcastic tone, my good cousin, were no 'smattering' with them; and if there had been more like them then their work of influence on the men of their times would have told wonderfully on them, and sent down purified and ennobled generations to our great advantage."

"Grand! quite your 'heroical!' to speak in artist language," said Mr. Davenant, in the same contemptuous tone.

"Very fine to be scornful; that does not alter truth," said Mr. Leporel; "do you believe that Lady Jane Grey had not a halo round her that shed its light on those around her? or, to come nearer our own times, what do you think of Lady William Russell? I could bring up many others who have stood in the foreground of their eras; if the mass had been leavened by more of such, England would be a far better nation than it is in this our day."

Laura's face recovered rapidly from the uncon-

fortable gloom that had clouded it in consequence of Mr. Davenant's remarks, and the general tone and manner he assumed with regard to the subject. She smiled with such a delighted expression at Myrtle, and looked so approvingly at Charles Leporel, that his daring opposition to her husband, which had made her a little nervous, was readily forgiven by the gentle wife.

"England is quite good enough for me as it is; and I greatly prefer Myrtle for a wife to Lady Jane Grey or lady anybody else; even Lady Augusta," said Mr. Davenant with affected indifference.

"You are running away from the ground," said Mr. Leporel; "I am sure these young Beverleys have been very badly treated in having been thrown upon the world defenceless as well as unprovided for."

"They wanted a good 'foreground' lady. Mrs. Beverley was not certainly, from what I have heard, adorned with—what did you call it?—a halo!" said Mr. Davenant.

"Drop ridicule, Carlton," said Mr. Leporel, a little sharply; "I have not studied the subject as it deserves, but I am sure of this: men treat women as if they were beings of an inferior order; they do their best to stunt their intelligence, and quench by ridicule their real love of knowledge; they keep them aloof from contact with the facts of social life, and assume the responsibility of providing for them as wives. Yet, by this management of their own affairs, they bring distress upon them and their children; and then the wife, or the widow, or the sister or daughter, as the case may be, is driven out to get bread as she can; driven into a hard, selfish world, unarmed and incompetent to meet its dangers and difficulties. Oh, it's too bad! Poor Beverley did not know what he was doing; but look at this family. Oh, Carlton, the days of our grandmothers were darker than they needed to be, or would have been, if more women of a high order had been among them; but this day, when a teeming population and a vast growth of appetite for knowledge and a terrible increase of evil have made England like—"

"Myrtle is half asleep, Charles," said Mr. Davenant; "we shall never finish this subject. Let it be a drawn battle, it is not fair to the ladies to agitate their minds, and send them away mourning over their hard case."

Mr. Leporel shook his head, but departed saying he was anxious to know what Clara had done with "the stone wrapped in parchment."

#### COMPETITIVE EXAMINATIONS FOR THE CIVIL SERVICE IN CHINA.

EVERY one who has taken an interest in Chinese affairs must be familiar with the title of the ruling class called "mandarins." But the name is foreign, and was introduced by the Portuguese, from the word *mandarin*, signifying a person in command, in order to designate by one general term all those in authority, from the heads of the central government down to petty provincial officials. Under their native titles these functionaries have a more numerous specification of grades than those belonging to the most elaborate titular system in Europe. It is no purpose of this short paper to enumerate the twenty-seven ranks which the constitution of China recognises of

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titular or privileged status flowing from the "fountain of honour" at Peking, but simply to show the means whereby the greater number of these honours are obtained, in what may be termed the Civil Service, which includes judicial and civic functions. As a rule, however, the highest offices and titles in the state, not including those that are imperial or hereditary, may be attained by the poorest male subject, if he be of the prescribed respectability of family and character. The grand foundation of his qualifications to fill a government post is based upon his literary talents, and his capability to pass the stringent competitive examinations instituted by the laws of the realm.

The educational institutions out of which these examinations have grown date farther back than the time of Confucius, who flourished five centuries before the Christian era; yet it is mainly upon the writings of that illustrious sage and his disciples that they are founded. It was not, however, until the early part of our seventh century, on the accession of the Tang dynasty, after the Chinese empire was thoroughly consolidated under one supreme emperor and central government, that the policy was inaugurated of securing the talent of the nation, in order to carry out the laws under an efficient executive, by opening the government offices to the most eligible candidates, irrespective of family or influence. At the same time, colleges were established of superior and inferior degrees for the education of students belonging to the privileged and unprivileged classes; but all had to pass the competitive examinations through which access was obtained to the offices of government. Since then many abuses of the system have crept in, especially that of purchase, where the state has conferred degrees upon persons for a pecuniary consideration, although the recipient may be comparatively an ignorant man, or, at all events, not versed in the Chinese classics. Nevertheless, the great bulk of officials are men of talent and learning, otherwise they cannot maintain their position long, under the eyes of the public censors, who boldly expose their shortcomings and delinquencies, resulting in their degradation or punishment.

The degrees of literary rank are four, some being divided into inferior and superior classes, while the lower grades must be passed to reach the higher diplomas. Of these the lowest or first degree is that of *Sieu-tsai*, signifying "talent flowering." To obtain this the candidates undergo three successive examinations. The first of these is in the smallest districts of their native province, where the chief magistrate of the district appoints the time and the theme for examination. Themes when finished are inspected by the magistrate, who selects the best, and causes the names of the authors to be entered on a roll and pasted up on the walls of his office. This is called *having a name in the village*; and by this it is known who are allowed to pass to the second examination, which takes place in the town of the next large district, and is similar to the first, only more rigorous. The successful candidates in these two examinations come for their third trial in the provincial city, before a functionary entitled the "Literary Chancellor" of the province. Those who are now successful receive their first degree of *Sieu-tsai*, which may be considered equivalent to our Bachelor of Arts degree. This entitles the graduates to be candidates for the second degree, or if they do not attain that honour, it still confers privileges upon

them which are not enjoyed by the non-official classes, such as being exempt from the degrading punishment of bastinado with the bamboo.

The second degree is named *Chu-jen*, or *Kew-jin*, signifying "promoted men." This is the most rigid and important of all the examinations, inasmuch as the unsuccessful candidates are debarred from competing for the third and fourth degrees. While the examinations for the first degree are held annually in the villages, towns, and cities, this is triennial, and conducted in the capital of each province, and on the same days throughout the empire. It lasts from twenty-five to thirty days, but the candidates are under actual trial only three days, with intervals of two days between each twenty-four hours, when they are imprisoned as it were in their literary cells. The candidates assemble during the eighth moon (September), each one bringing the chancellor's certificate that he has passed the first degree, together with his place of residence, lineage, age, and a description of his features and person, so that no personation should take place. The number of candidates who assemble in the chief provincial capitals is between seven thousand and eight thousand, while in the imperial capital accommodation is made for ten thousand aspirants. They are generally attended by their friends, who swell the throng to double and sometimes treble these numbers, increasing the hum and bustle of the streets, and giving a fresh impulse to the mercantile business of the city. Occasionally the younger students become somewhat uproarious, like the *alumni* of our own universities, who sometimes sacrifice decorum to their exuberance of spirits on degree-conferring days. The writer of this article happened to be in the populous city of Woo-chang, the capital of Hoo-peh, during the triennial examination, and with his companions was rudely accosted by the students, who shouted out the obnoxious epithet of "*Fan-Kwei!*" which means "foreign devil." However, it must be said that on being politely remonstrated with by a linguist of the party, who quoted some passages from Confucius on good behaviour, they seemed heartily ashamed, and apologised for their rudeness.

The board of examiners at these great literary trials is composed of two distinguished officers from Peking, chosen by the emperor, or regent if he be a minor. These are assisted by the other examiners, who are selected from the local officers, over whom the governor of the province presides. Besides the members of the board there are numerous inferior officers, who act as inspectors, guards, and police to maintain order, and see that the regulations are enforced. There are also menials and attendants to provide and cook food for the candidates. All these together, amounting to ten thousand and upwards, assemble at the *Kung-yuen*, which in the provincial capitals, as at Canton, is a large and spacious building, designed solely for these occasions. It contains as many apartments, or cells rather, as there are students, so that each candidate may be separated from his competitors. In Peking this separation is more complete, where each student is located in a diminutive shed, in the open air, where ten thousand, less one, cover a large area of ground.

When the examiners have taken their seats in the great hall, then the students are admitted. On entering the outer gate of the *Kung-yuen*, each candidate must write his name in a book kept for the purpose; and if it is afterwards discovered that the

name was erroneously written, then the officer superintending the register is arrested and delivered over to a court of inquiry; and if it is ascertained that the student has employed any person to compose his essays for him, or if he be found guilty of any other similar illegality, both he and his accomplices are tried and punished. Moreover, the student on entering the hall of examination is searched; and if it be discovered that he has with him any precomposed essay, or miniature copy of the classics, he is punished by bearing the wooden collar or cangue, degraded from the rank of *Sieu-tsai*, and incapacitated to stand for literary honours.

Having passed through this searching ordeal, the student then retires to his cell, which is allotted to him by number. This chamber measures about four feet by three, and is six feet high. In it are two boards, the one to sit upon, the other movable, so as to serve either as a writing-desk or an eating-table. Although the bare board is his only sleeping-place at night, yet it is not long enough for an ordinary man to stretch himself upon, so that he has to double himself up when he goes to sleep. Besides this furniture, if it may be so called, there is a teapot and teacup for refreshment, and a small stone slab for grinding the cake of ink upon, with a camel-hair reed pencil for writing, and a supply of paper on which to write the themes and essays. It is a firm, thick paper, the only kind that may be used, and must be inspected at the office, where its price is fixed by authority, and an official stamp put upon the sheets.

Even this cell and its scant furnishings are examined to see that no forbidden article has been clandestinely introduced; and also each and all of the managers, copyists, attendant officers, servants, porters, and others having access to the students, are searched. If in any manner a learned person, who has to decide on the papers, be admitted to the apartments of the students, disguised as a servant, he is punished, and the chief examiner delivered over to a court of inquiry. A watch, composed of military officers and soldiers, is maintained day and night, both in the inner and outer courts of the hall; and if any of these men are guilty of conveying papers to the candidates, concealed with their food, or in any other way, they are severely punished.

The first trial is on the ninth of the eighth moon; the second on the twelfth, and the third on the fifteenth. The candidates are required to enter their apartments on the day preceding the examination, and are not allowed to leave them until the day after it is closed. Thus they must pass two days and nights in close and solitary confinement at a time, in little sentry-boxes where they cannot lie down, and surrounded by the smoke caused in cooking for them; and this is repeated thrice, so that altogether they often sit up, in extremely hot weather, six nights. This toil and inconvenience, not at all pleasant to young people, is frequently fatal to the old persons who attempt it. So coveted is the degree that candidates range from seventeen to seventy years of age, and cases have been known where venerable octogenarians have attempted the task and succumbed. All who choose may be candidates at these exhibitions, excepting menials, their children and grandchildren, police-officers, play-actors, and those who have been convicted of any crime.

On the first trial seven themes proposed by the president are exhibited to each student, upon which

he is to write briefly, elegantly, and sententiously. When these are finished they are consigned to the proper officers, who deliver them to notaries to copy in red letters, in order that the composer's handwriting may not be known to the examiners. The students are now at liberty; while the "faculty," on the two following days, review the papers with such rigour that the least error is sufficient to exclude the student from further examination. A catalogue of those who have faults in their compositions is afterwards affixed to the outer wall of the enclosure, which serves for advice to return home, as they cannot go any further in this trial.

The second time, they enter again on the twelfth day of the moon, and the process gone through is the same as before, except that the president gives only three topics, and those concerning doubtful matters of government, to see how they would advise the emperor. On the examination of these compositions many are shut out from the third trial, which takes place on the fifteenth day. Here also three points are proposed respecting the laws and customs of the realm. When these compositions are received, they shut up the hall for fifteen days, during which time they are sifted again, and a small selection is consigned to the president for the last scrutiny, and for assigning to each successful candidate his rank. When this is done a catalogue of the names is exposed to the crowd of people, who are waiting, some for a son or brother, and some for a father or friend. The students having received from the emperor's officers their insignia, as the cap, gown, and boots, presently go to give thanks to the president, who receives them as his equals.

Of the seven thousand who compete at the Canton triennial examinations, only seventy-one can obtain the degree of *Kew-jin*, equivalent to our Master of Arts. The names of these are published by a proclamation on the tenth of the ninth moon, and within twenty-five days after the examination is closed. This time is allowed the examiners to read the essays and prepare their report. The proclamation which contains the names of the successful candidates, after it has received its appropriate signatures, is posted up in the office of the provincial governor. At a given hour three guns are fired, and the lieutenant-governor at the same time comes forth from his palace accompanying the official notification. It is then posted up, and again three guns are fired; after which his excellency advances and bows three times towards the names of the *Kew-jin* as "promoted men," and finally retires under another salute of three guns.

Ten thousand anxious minds are now relieved from their long suspense. Swift messengers are despatched by those who have won the prizes to announce to their friends the happy result of the long trial they have undergone; and while the many return with disappointment to their homes, the successful few are loaded with encomiums and congratulations, and their names with their essays sent up to the emperor. To crown the whole a banquet is prepared for these newly-promoted men; and the examiners, and all the civil officers of rank in the province, join in these festivities. Gold and silver cups must be provided for the occasion by the provincial treasurer. The chief examiner from Peking presides; the lieutenant-governor, at whose palace the banquet is given, and who is present only as a visitor, is seated on his right, and the assistant

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examiner on his left. The governor-general of two provinces is also present; while a train of inferior officers wait as servants, and two youths dressed like naiads, holding in their hands branches of olives, grace the scene, and add to its harmony by chanting a song from the ancient classics.

The third degree is called *Chin-shii*, or *Tsin-sze*, signifying "introduced scholars." This is solemnly conferred upon the successful candidates at the court of Peking once in every three years. All graduates throughout the empire who have passed the second degree, and have not in the meantime accepted office under government, are admitted to the examination. Their travelling expenses to Peking are paid either wholly or in part by the emperor. The procedure is the same as in the previous trials, except that the examiners are of higher rank. This degree is equivalent to that of Doctor of Laws conferred by our own universities. After receiving it the "new doctors" are introduced to the emperor, and do him reverence, while the three highest on the list receive rewards from his majesty's own hands.

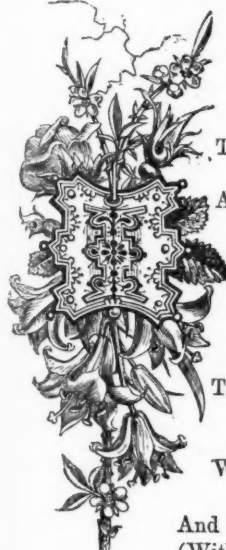
The fourth and highest degree is called *Chang-yuen*, or *Han-lin*, which means, "ascended to the top of the tree." It is also conferred once in three years. The examination for it takes place in the imperial palace at Peking, in the presence of the emperor, and the candidates are those who have received the other three degrees. An instance is recorded of a student taking all the four degrees within nine months; and of another, Le, afterwards governor of Kwangtung, who took them all before he entered on office. As to the rejected candidates, they are very numerous, many of them living in a state of poverty, as poor proud scholars, who prefer to beg or starve rather than turn their hands to any ordinary occupation to obtain a living.

Concerning the text of the themes on which the students compose their essays the following will give some idea. Tsangtsze said, "To possess ability, and yet ask of those who do not; to know much, and yet inquire of those who know little; to possess, and yet appear not to possess; to be full, and yet appear empty." A second theme was, "He took hold of things by the two extremes, and in his treatment of the people maintained the golden rule." A third theme is from Mencius, "A man from his youth studies eight principles, and when he arrives at manhood he wishes to reduce them to practice." Another from Tsangtsze was, "When persons in high stations are sincere in the performance of relative and domestic duties, the people generally will be stimulated to the practice of virtue." On this theme we shall conclude with an extract from a successful essayist as follows:—

"When the upper classes are really virtuous, the common people will inevitably become so. For though the sincere performance of relative duties by superiors does not originate in a wish to stimulate the people, yet the people do become virtuous, which is a proof of the effect of sincerity. As benevolence is the radical principle of all good government in the world, so also benevolence is the radical principle amongst the people. Traced back to its source, benevolent feeling refers to a first progenitor; traced forwards it branches out to a hundred generations yet to come. The source of personal existence is one's parents, the relations which originate from heaven are most intimate; and that in which natural feeling blends is felt most deeply. That which is given by heaven, and by natural feeling to all, is done without any distinction between noble or ignoble. One feeling pervades all."

SAMUEL MOSSMAN.

### Among the Flowers.



'T was the prime  
Of summer time,  
And every thing was fair;  
Shining things  
With gauzy wings  
Glanced through the scented  
air;  
The lark was high  
In the blue sky,  
The bees were on the flowers,  
Where hedgerows made  
A pleasant shade  
With graceful rosy bowers.

And in the street  
(With noontide heat)  
The noontide's searching glare  
Bathed all in light  
Gorgeously bright  
That it discovered there:—  
The hovel mean  
With thatch grown green,  
And crumbling wall of clay,

Stood out as bold  
In cloth of gold  
As any courtier gay;

Our village street  
Where careless meet  
The odds and ends of things;  
While in and out  
And round about  
The mantling ivy clings;  
The blacksmith's forge,  
The "Royal George,"  
The shop, the farm, the school,  
The elm-tree seat,  
Where patriots meet  
To mend the nation's rule.

But still and lone  
The street had grown,  
Except where children played,  
Or aged crones  
Rested their bones  
Beneath the elm-tree's shade,

Or infancy  
 With piteous cry  
 Bemoaned its nurse, away  
 To labour torn  
 With the sunny morn  
 Among the fragrant hay.

Softly as sweet,  
 Along the street  
 So lonely and so still,  
 A birdlike song  
 Stole in among  
 The children's laughter shrill,  
 And mutterings  
 Of aged things,  
 And cries of infancy;  
 And bound them all  
 With subtle thrall  
 Of gentle potency.

From distance low  
 The measures grow,  
 And the rich birdlike voice  
 Advancing gains  
 Such swelling strains  
 As make the young rejoice,  
 And listening age  
 By force engage  
 Of sounds so sweet, forsooth  
 To wander back  
 Time's long-past track,  
 Half cheated into youth!

And now appears,  
 Beyond the years  
 Allotted unto man,  
 One bending low,  
 Feeble and slow,  
 With features pale and wan.  
 He tottered on  
 Beneath the sun,  
 Nor felt its piercing rays;  
 For he was cold  
 Through blood grown old,  
 And weariness of days.

No ray of light  
 From heaven so bright  
 Upon his eyeballs fell;  
 Poor, old, and blind,  
 He looked resigned,  
 And he was guided well.  
 A little maid  
 Beside him strayed,  
 With step as free as air,  
 And form and face,  
 By Nature's grace,  
 Most exquisitely fair.

Now they would stand,  
 His withered hand  
 Upon her shoulder laid,  
 And forth would float  
 That birdlike note,  
 While carelessly she played  
 With flowers of May,  
 That withering lay,  
 Within the russet fold  
 That she had bound  
 Her girdle round,  
 Her simple prize to hold.

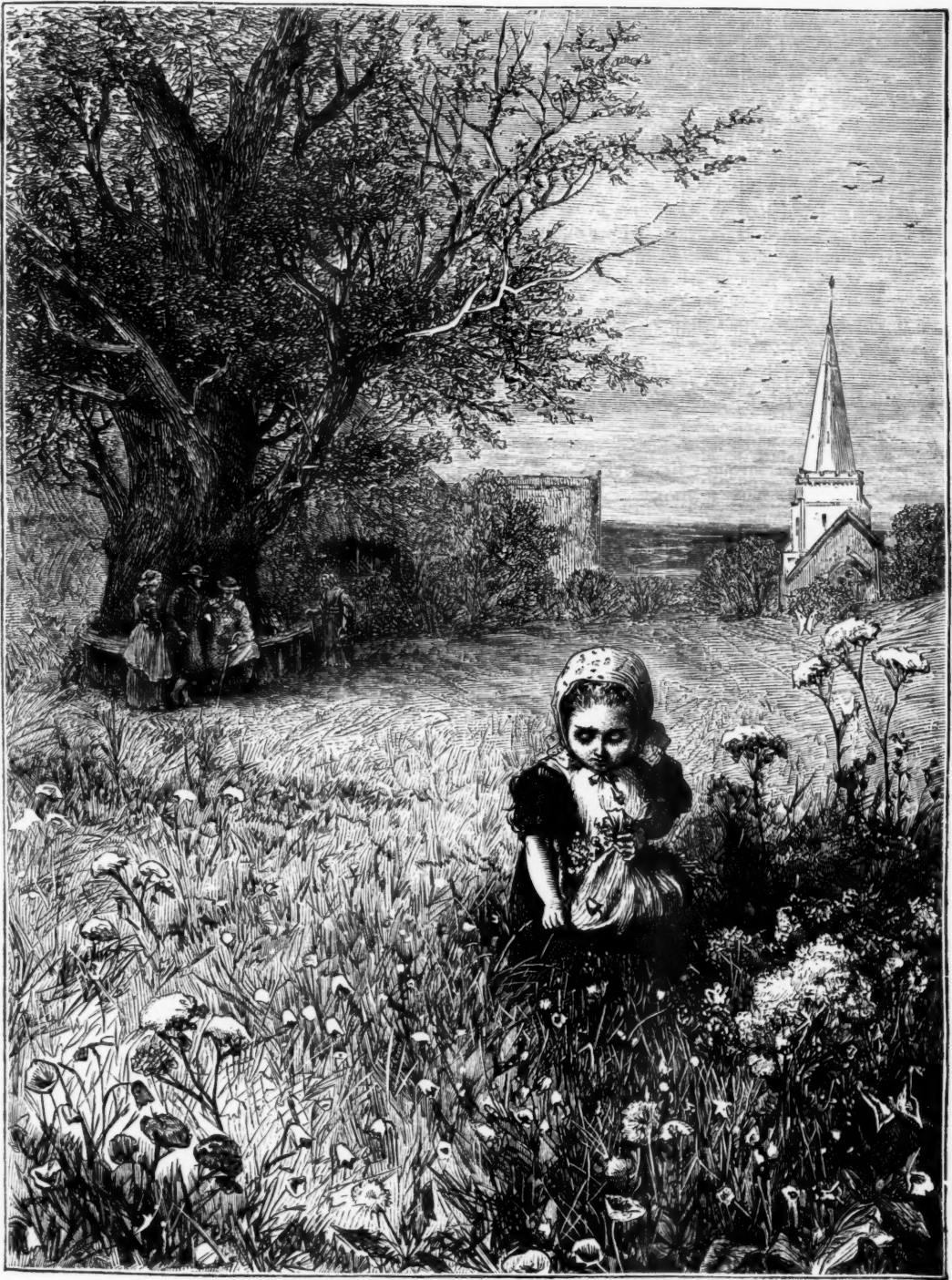
For song so sweet  
 Such gifts were meet  
 As opened hearts could find,  
 And young and old  
 Their pleasure told  
 In simple offerings kind:  
 The milky draught  
 (Gratefully quaffed),  
 The rest beneath the tree,  
 The cowslip ball,  
 From children small,  
 Toss'd up with childish glee.

The aged man  
 His tale began,  
 And, as the story grew,  
 The aged round,  
 With face profound,  
 Still nearer to him drew,  
 And hands upraised,  
 And looks amazed,  
 And solemn shaking head,  
 With artless zeal  
 Affixed their seal  
 To everything he said.

(For idlest tale  
 Doth seldom fail  
 The rustic heart to move,  
 Not logic's rules,  
 Nor arts of schools,  
 They need its truth to prove;  
 Cheated to-day,  
 To-morrow they  
 Are ready to believe,  
 As if they knew  
 All men were true  
 And never could deceive.)

But where had strayed  
 The little maid  
 While he his story told?  
 She was away  
 For the snow-white may,  
 And the bright marsh marigold,





AMONG THE FLOWERS

And the pink cuckoo,  
And the violet blue,  
And had twined a garland fair,  
And placed it now.  
On her open brow  
To bind her silken hair.

And the russet fold,  
With blue and gold  
Was filled up to the brim,  
When, with sparkling eyes  
O'er her fragrant prize,  
She hastened back to him;  
Her face was bright  
With full delight,  
Like glittering summer showers.  
The elm-tree seat  
For *his* rest was meet,  
But *hers* was among the flowers.

Then through the street  
That song so sweet  
Rose joyously again;  
But they passed along,  
And the birdlike song  
Died like the far-off strain  
Of the lark on high,  
In the clear blue sky,  
Or the distant evening chime

That sweetly tells  
With its silvery bells  
Of the silent march of time.

And very oft  
In numbers soft  
The little maiden's strain,  
When doubts perplex  
Or sorrows vex,  
Comes back to me again,  
Distilling balm,  
Cordial and calm,  
My fainting heart to raise,  
Till I rejoice  
In the sweet voice,  
And make it hymns of praise.

And if "a thing  
Of beauty" bring  
"A joy that is for ever,"  
That little maid  
In flowers arrayed,  
Can I forget her?—never!  
With her I learn  
Aside to turn  
In sultry weary hours,  
And seek the shade  
Our God hath made,  
"And rest among the flowers!"

F. P.

## AN OLD NEWSPAPER.

WE have before us a volume of the "Stamford Mercury" for the year 1716, the volume containing the weekly issues from the beginning of January to the end of June inclusive. A more interesting specimen of the early literature of the Fourth Estate is hardly to be met with, and, in fulfilment of a promise made to our readers some time ago, we shall invite them to a glance at its contents. The "Stamford Mercury," be it understood, is one of the oldest real newspapers that ever appeared in England. At the time of the Civil War there were a variety of publications, appearing fitfully, and of a party character, which have been called newspapers, but which had no real claim to be so considered. There are also in existence a small number of copies of a publication styled the "English Mercurie," professing to come out under the authority of Queen Elizabeth, and to be imprinted by Christopher Barker, her highness's printer—in which are contained accounts of the Spanish Armada and of the transactions between her majesty's fleet and that of Spayne. But, in fact, there never were any publications of the kind in Queen Elizabeth's reign; the copies in question, though they have deceived many, are but ingenious forgeries, produced about the year 1766, as Mr. Watts, of the British Museum, has satisfactorily shown. The first real newspaper published in England was brought out by Sir Roger L'Estrange in 1663, under the title of "The Public Intelligencer," and it continued but for a year or two,

when it ceased on the appearance of the "Gazette." The existing series of the "London Gazette" dates from about the middle of the seventeenth century; and with this single exception, the "Stamford Mercury" is, we believe, the oldest English newspaper now in circulation. What may be its exact age we cannot say. The volume before us is the seventh, and, if the volumes were yearly, the first number must have appeared in 1709, among the very first of the regular newspapers, which only came into being after the abolition of the censorship of the press in 1695.

Let us glance now at the volume. The first thing that strikes us is the extraordinary contrast between the broad sheet of to-day and the handy leaflets of 160 years ago. Measuring the print on the page, we find that it is barely seven inches long by four and a-half in width, and the whole of the week's news is contained in twelve of these small pages, or rather in eleven—one page of each number being occupied by the full-blown title, which runs thus: "Stamford Mercury, being Historical and Political Observations on the Transactions of Europe, together with Remarks on Trade. Price Three-halfpence." Though the contents answer to the title very fairly, we can find no trace of original matter, both the foreign and home news being copied from the current news-letters of the day, the "Evening Post," etc., and both observations and remarks, where such occur, being derived from like sources. It is tole-

rably clear that the "able editor" was a veritable factotum, doing the entire work himself and bearing the entire responsibility.

If the reader imagines, however, that the materials of the volume are of small moment, he is mistaken. Let him look for an instant at the condition of affairs at the time of which these tiny news-leaves treat. The first George had been little more than a year on the throne, and found himself anything but comfortable or secure in his seat. The Pretender, the Chevalier St. George, notwithstanding the miserable collapse at Preston and the virtual defeat on the same day at Sheriff Muir, had landed in Scotland, and during the early part of the year was getting himself proclaimed, and parading about with the airs and pretensions of royalty, while in all parts of the kingdom the Jacobites were on the alert and ready to rush to his standard at the first dawn of success. Louis XIV, the grand scourge of his race, had been dead but a few months, and the English people, no longer under the excitement of warlike triumph, and sick of the cost of those weary wars, were clamouring for the remission of the fiscal burdens they had borne so long. Riots, both in London and the provinces, were of frequent occurrence, and were seldom unaccompanied by bloodshed. There was intense suffering in consequence of the inclement winter; robberies and violence prevailed to such an extent that the public ways were unsafe. A populace the reverse of loyal laid all their grievances to the account of the new dynasty, and were ever ingenious in coupling everything hateful, mean, and disgusting with the name of Hanover. The law was as vindictive as the mob were turbulent; and offences which in later times would have been lightly punished, if punished at all, were visited by penalties always severe and sometimes cruel.

First in importance among the entries we are about to select are the items of news from the North concerning the Pretender and his affairs. Various reports of battles and skirmishes, printed from time to time, turn out to be false, showing how imperfect at that period were the means of getting at facts. We learn, on January 7th, that the Pretender had landed at Peterhead, near Aberdeen, with a retinue of two to three hundred persons, the Duke of Ormond among them. Two days later King George, in his speech to the Houses of Parliament, informs them of that fact. Next comes intelligence that the Pretender had gone to Seoon, with the intention of being crowned on the 16th by an archbishop of St. Andrews, whom he had created archbishop for the purpose. In the interval he visits Perth and Dundee, courting popularity, bowing graciously to the multitude, but *not* giving his hand to kiss to such as desired it. After his arrival at Perth there was a ball, at which he appeared in a Highland dress, with a black Scotch bonnet set with diamonds and a white feather in it. Among the ladies who were present were the Duchess Dowager of G—, and the Earl of Seaford's sister, to whom he made a present of a gold snuff-box with his picture on it. At Seoon he issued proclamations for his coronation, for assembling a parliament at Perth, and summoning all sensible men to join his standard. About the same time, we learn, a reward of £50,000 was offered by the Government for his apprehension. Then, on the last day of January comes news that the rebels, in great consternation and terror, at the approach of the Duke of Argyle's forces, have broken up their camp,

called in all their garrisons, burned their stores, and taken to flight. On the 4th of February the Pretender embarked at Montrose, along with the Earl of Mar and others, "but whether the wind carried him to Norway or to France is not certain," though we learn afterwards that he arrived safely at Gravesend.

So the Pretender is got rid of, and then follows the ugly business of punishing the rebels. The English, the loyal Scotch, and the Dutch auxiliaries, gave chase to the disheartened Highlanders, and from time to time we read in these old pages the news of their surprise and capture, their imprisonment, trials, and executions. Meanwhile, there is much excitement all through the country on the score of the six lords who had been committed to the Tower in the previous year for their part in the rebellion; and we read early in February that—

"This morning a detachment of the foot guards took post at all the avenues leading to Westminster Hall, to prevent any disturbance, and give free access to the members of both Houses; about 12 a clock the 6 Lords, attended by a Guard, came in 3 coaches from the Tower; at their entrance into Westminster Hall a person unknown carry'd the axe *with the edge upwards* before them into the scaffold, where a place below was prepared for them; at past 12, the judges in their formalities, 2 and 2, came through the painted chamber to Westminster Hall, and were followed by the Lord Chief Justices, with 4 maces before them; then the Lords all in their robes, to the number of 78, passed to the same place, and were followed by the Lord High Steward, with 5 maces before him; their lordships being all seated in their proper places, all the Commons entered at another passage, and were seated in a gallery provided for that purpose; then the Lord High Steward rose and made a fine but short speech, at the conclusion of which the aforesaid Lords were called in one after another, and presented at the bar by the Deputy Governor of the Tower; the composed articles concerning their crimes of rebellion, by several Acts of Parliament, were read, after which the Lord High Steward pronounced sentence against them, to be hanged, drawn, and quartered, &c., but was pleased to signify that, according to their degree, they would suffer a more favourable death than the sentence. At 4 a clock the Peers and Commons returned to their Houses, and the prisoners guarded to the Tower, with the axe carry'd before them, *with the edge down.*"

Then we read of Lady Derwentwater getting into the king's chamber, casting herself in despair at his feet, and beseeching him to reprove her husband—to no purpose. Then a *posse* of ladies get access to the Prince of Wales, and implore him to intercede—also to no purpose. Then poor Lady Derwentwater, accompanied by the Countess of Dorchester and other friends, appeal to the House of Commons, who will not listen to her. Then she flies to the Lords, and the Duke of Richmond takes pity on her, and gets her petition read, and the result is that application is made to the king to exercise his prerogative of mercy; and the king replies, on this, as on all other occasions, he will do what he thinks best for the honour of his government and the safety of his kingdom. What his majesty thought best for his honour and safety is clear from the following passage:—

"Yesterday (the date is Feb. 26) about 10 in the forenoon, James Radcliff, Earl of Derwentwater, and Wm. Gordon, Viscount Kenmuir, were carried in 2 coaches from the Tower to the Transport Office upon Tower Hill, where a room was hung in black for their reception; from thence the said Earl first walked between rails, likewise being in black, where, having made some prayers, he threw his hat and wigg upon the boards, and put on a fine napkin for his cap, then unbuttoned his coat and waistcoat, gave it the executioner, afterwards fitted the block, then rose again; about 11 his head was severed from his body at one blow. Within half-an-hour the Lord Kenmuir, assisted by 2 divines of the Church of England, came upon the scaffold; a relation of his Lordship's said, he hoped he was not quite dis-



pirited; *No, truly*, answered the Lord, *I never was in better heart in all my life-time.* After some devotions, he submitted to the block, and the executioner severed his head about 12 a clock."

There would have been a third sufferer in this bloody scene had not the wit of one woman been more successful than the despairing tears and anguish of many others. The Earl of Nithsdale would have died with Derwentwater and Kenmuir, had he not managed to escape by a clever contrivance. We have all read romantic histories of Nithsdale's escape, and our hearts have heaved with emotion at the tales of noble daring and devotion his wife is said to have exhibited. It is rather disappointing to read the unadorned fact in this veritable chronicle, which runs simply thus:—

"On Thursday night last, between 8 and 9 a clock, the Earl of Nithsdale, in woman's cloaths, made his escape, and took one of the warders along with him; they contrived some hours before to make the other 3 warders (which were to guard that Lord all night) merry with good liquors, to conceal the design of his going off. The Governor being informed therewith, caused all parts of the Tower to be searched, and ordered the aforesaid 3 warders immediately to be seized and put into the dungeon."

The wife does not appear in this account, nor does she appear in any authentic history we know of. It was the mother of Nithsdale, and not his wife, who, according to Smollet (who may have written about thirty years after the event), arranged the plan for her son's escape, and supplied him with the means of carrying it into execution.

The other three lords were not executed, but they were made to suffer none the less, being reprieved at short intervals over and over again; while the scaffold on which their unfortunate colleagues had died was kept standing on Tower Hill. Meantime, the trials and executions of rebels went on rapidly throughout the kingdom—the prisons everywhere were overflowing, and had to be emptied. Some were slain as rebels who had never even dreamed of rebelling, but had been taken while unwittingly in the company of insurgents. Numbers were reprieved from death to be sent off to the Plantations, which was virtually consigning them to slavery. Hundreds were put to death whose guilt, if guilt it was, was rather fidelity to their masters than treason to their sovereign. The severity of the Government grew intolerable to the people, who neglected no opportunity of showing that it was so. They attacked the scaffold on Tower Hill with knives and axes, and were with difficulty prevented from burning it down. They mobbed the Government officials at every public occasion, and rioted at fairs and gatherings, attacking the houses of ministers, and shouting "High Church and Ormond for ever!" The three lords finally found grace—thanks, probably, to the state of public feeling; the Earl of Wintoun, it is hinted, however, owing his pardon to his having acted "like a mere idiot at his trial." By degrees the prosecutions ceased, but the severity so long exercised left a bad impression on the public mind.

We have hinted at the insecurity of the highways. Had we space we might cite a crowd of instances; one or two must suffice. In January two fellows robbed all the coaches on the Chelmsford road, and one of them having taken thirty guineas from a gentleman, gave him back his watch, on the condition that if he, the robber, was taken the other would not prosecute him. About the same time the Highgate stage was robbed, by one man, of property to the

value of over £200. Another fellow attacked two gentlemen, and, just as about to shoot one of them, was cleverly disarmed by the other, and taken. Two persons were robbed, stripped, and butchered on the bank of the New River at Islington; and in Holloway a gang stationed themselves at a certain spot, seized, pillaged, and stripped all who came by, threw their victims into a ditch, and kept them there under guard until the gang were satisfied with their booty, and chose to retire. Between London and Bow a clergyman and a justice of the peace, having a servant with them, were attacked by footpads, rifled of everything, stripped to the skin, and cast into a deep slough, whence they escaped with the utmost difficulty.

In connection with crime, we may notice the escapes of criminals, some of which would have done credit to Jack Sheppard himself. Thus, a batch of rebels, marching to prison under a guard of soldiers, one of them suddenly darted from the rank, leaped a five-barred gate, and ran, and though a dozen or more of the guards fired at him, he was not hit, and got clear off. Brigadier Mackintosh, a noted rebel, confined with others in Newgate, attacked with some confederates one of the turnkeys, stabbing him in the knee. As the man cried out, and other persons came to his assistance, the whole of them rushed at the opening door and forced a passage, and though all the rest were retaken, Mackintosh made good his retreat. General Forster, one of the rebel leaders, succeeded in amusing his keeper with a bowl of punch, and vanished during the conviviality, contriving to lock the door after him, and thus prevent pursuit. A thousand pounds were offered for his re-apprehension, but without result, Forster getting safe off to the Continent. Most startling case of all, and one which has probably never been paralleled, was that of a highwayman who, while his trial was going on, actually leaped over the spikes of the dock and, fettered as he was, fought his way out of the court and escaped.

The winter of 1715-16 is said to have been, with the single exception of that of 1708-9, the most rigorous ever known in these islands. These old pages contain many records of the severity of the frost and the distress it gave rise to. In many parts of the country persons were lost in the snow, while in London the poor were frequently found frozen to death in the streets. We quote the following description from an entry, dated January 14th:—

"The Thames is now become one solid rock of ice; coaches, carriers with their horses and their waggons have passed like a public road; booths for the sale of brandy, wine, ale and other liquors, have been fixed there for some time. But now it is made in a manner like a town; thousands and thousands of people cross it, and with wonder view the mountainous heaps of water that now lie congealed into ice, notwithstanding the resistance given to the cold by the movement of the tide. On Thursday a pretty large cook's shop was erected there, and people went as regularly to the ordinary as they do in the City. Over against Westminster Hall, Whitehall, and White Fryars, printing-presses are kept upon the ice, where thousands of people have their names printed off, to transmit the wonders of the season to their children. It has not much longer to continue to equal, or even outdo the great frost (1709), which is now made, as it were, an era of time."

Again, under date January 19th:—

"The booths on the Thames increase daily, where all manner of goods are sold; and this day 3 whole oxen were roasted upon it, viz. one near Lambeth, the 2d near St. Paul's Wharf, and the 3d near Rotherhith, below London Bridge, where people walk on the ice, as 'tis said, beyond Gravesend."

So severe was the frost, that even when a strong spring-tide came on the 21st, and overflowed Palace Yard, raising the ice "many feet perpendicular," it caused no interruption to the diversions on the Thames.

Following the iron frost came a magnificent aurora borealis, which drew much attention, and is described at full; and a formidable phenomenon was observed at Elstone, near Newark, which is thus described by a clergyman, an eye-witness:—

"On Tuesday last, the 6th of March, when coming home to my house from Newark, I observed in the north-west a long and broad stream of light issuing out of a darkish cloud (betwixt 20 and 25 degrees of the horizon as near as I can guess) like to the beams of the sun setting in a drizzling evening, the stream pointing directly towards the zenith. I was somewhat amazed at it, considering the sun had been then more than an hour set, and the moon's rising not being till morning. Presently after some other streams issued out of another cloud near to the former with a very unusual light, and with a variety of colours, black, blue, flame-colour, yellow, &c., and so more and more till all that part of the heavens was overspread. During this whole time, never were seen such contentions (as it were) as betwixt these meteors—being all in confusion, and darting one against another, with an incredible force and swiftness, for about an hour and a half. Through all that region of air where this confusion and strife (for I can term it nothing else) was, the stars appeared clear as thro' a thin bright smock, or as the sun sometimes through a thin bright cloud. The other part of the heaven towards the north-east and south-east was very clear, the stars bright and twinkling as in a cold winter's night when there is no moon. About nine at night these meteors (if I may so call them) in a great measure disappeared, but not quite; some faint sort of contentions (as it were) were still perceived: And about ten of the clock they broke out again with a fresh violence in the same manner as before, and so continued till about half an hour past eleven. About twelve a bright globular body appeared, as big as, and like the sun at his rising, but not quite so clear. Indeed it was the most astounding sight I ever yet beheld. During this time the light was such that I myself (though now almost sixty years of age) and another clergyman did read several titles of the books in the Bible, without any use of art. The night was calm, not so much as a breath of wind was perceived. It began, according to my opinion, in the north-west, and so drew round to the south-east. It was observed by a thousand people, not without the greatest wonder, and with strange apprehensions; some looking for the day of judgment, others as the presages of future events and calamities."

From among the articles of general news we may quote a few items illustrative of the customs and ideas of the day. For instance, it happened that while the Westminster boys were delivering some Latin orations in the presence of the Bishop of Rochester, a person well dressed,

"and that carried the appearance of a gentleman was catch'd in the act of picking a gold snuff-box out of the pocket of another gentleman who was one of the audience. The scholars secured him peaceably till the orations were finished, and afterwards drew themselves out in order for the administration of justice; and arming themselves with rods, they stripp'd the fellow, gave him a pretty handsome gauntlet among them, and when they had schooled him with better principles they turned him loose."

About the middle of April, the South Sea Company received an account that their ship, the "Wiltshire," arrived in the Downs from Buenos Ayres, in the Spanish West Indies, and brings news that the two hundred negroes she took on board at Guinea sold at very good prices.

In May, one Thomas White, the murderer of Mrs. Knapp, being set to the bar at the Sessions House, Old Bailey, refused to plead. He was taken back to Newgate in order to be pressed. He was no sooner put into the press, however, than he altered his mind, and being reconducted to the bar, pleaded not guilty, but was brought in guilty by the jury.

Under date of January 14, is the information that—

"Last night between 8 and 9 o'clock, a duel was fought at the Gravel Pits, between Major Cathcart, brother to the Lord Cathcart, and Alexander Gordon, esq. Member of Parliament for the shire of Sutherland; the former was killed on the spot, and the latter has received 5 wounds, and, according to the opinion of his surgeon, cannot recover."

As a piece of foreign news we are told that at Vienna a youth of sixteen, condemned for blaspheming God and his providence, was executed; his tongue was first cut out, and then he was beheaded. Under date January 10, it is stated that the Commons, in a Committee on Ways and Means, had voted a tax of four shillings in the pound on all lands, tenements, and pensions for one year, and that all Popish recusants are to pay thirteen shillings and fourpence in the pound towards suppressing the rebellion in Scotland. It is added, at a later date, that in a House consisting of over 300 members, only one gentleman objected to this enormous tax on incomes. In February a Bill was brought in to prevent the Irish Papists from serving in either horse or foot guards, "although they will swallow the oaths." Again, in March we learn that (to encourage the Catholics?) the Commons—

"are bringing in a Bill to corroborate the last Act against Popery, by obliging the children of Papists, at 18 years of age to embrace the Protestant religion, and to take the oaths to the king, or else they shall not inherit their estates, but they shall descend to the next Protestant heir."

Some significant indications of the state of society may be gathered from the advertisements, which, by the way, are very few, hardly averaging more than half-a-dozen in a week, and could therefore have contributed little towards the support of the journal. The quack doctor of 1716, like his congeners of our own time, was the most persevering advertiser, and we note that he qualifies his prescriptions with a religious phrase, doubtless with a view to business. What seems now rather odd is his referring his customers for a supply of his nostrums to the man that distributes the "Stamford Mercury," who, it seems, must have carried on a double trade—as a dealer in physic as well as a retailer of news. Most of the sporting news we meet with are advertisements of cock fights, often on a barbarously grand scale, at specified times and places. A frequent advertisement is that of "a milched ass for sale," sometimes with a foal, pointing to the preference for asses' milk, which at that date was thought to possess wonderful curative properties, and the use of which was further fashionable as a supposed purifier of the complexion when used as a wash.

We do not see things advertised as bargains, but as pennyworths, which strikes us as a more modest and befitting expression. Whether the following offer comes under the denomination of a pennyworth, we leave the reader to determine:—

"If any clergyman of good character has the misfortune to be destitute of preferment, and will accept of a curacy of £27 in money yearly, and a horse kept, let him with speed send to Mr. Wilson, Bookseller in Boston, Mr. Ross, Bookseller in Louth, or the Reverend Mr. Charles Burnett, of Burgh in the Marsh, near Spilsby in the county of Lincoln, and he may be further satisfied."

A better pennyworth, we should say, is the offer of a Mr. Little, of Northampton, who, in a cellar under Mr. Cornell's shop, has stores of prime port wine of excellent flavour and in fine condition for drinking,

which he will sell in any quantity "to any gentleman" at the rate of 5s. 6d. a gallon.

The following announcement seems to point rather significantly to the state of education, and no less so to that of educators:—

"If any single man that can teach children the grammar perfectly, will come to Maxey, 4 miles from Stamford, and undertake a school there, he may have his board, washing, and lodging a year through, for learning of 4 children, and pay for all other that come, above the said 4 children. John Catlin of the town will certify any person thereof."

Another advertisement for a schoolmaster is a little more liberal—the desiderated pedagogue had, however, to officiate as parish clerk as well as to teach plain hand-writing, accounts, and English. This post was so much coveted, and such a number of applications poured in, that they had to be stopped by a subsequent announcement to the effect that the vacancy was filled.

Among the celebrated characters of whom mention is made from time to time in these sheets, we meet with the Duke of Schomberg, who is rewarded for his services with a grant of £4,000 a-year from the revenues of the Post Office, with Mr. Walpole, who gets a grant of £1,000 a-year from the same source; and with the Duke of Marlborough, who, however, is only mentioned incidentally. These were not the days of the great duke's popularity; the people had, for the time, forgotten his victories, and rejoiced in his disgrace, and they jeered him for turning a penny by supplying the army with shirts too coarse to be worn, and not worth a third of the regulation price. The troops paraded the shirts on their pikes as they marched through London, crying out, "Look at the Hanover shirts!" King George, in a rage at the paltry trick, ordered the whole of the shirts to be burnt, and supplied the troops with new ones.

Another historical celebrity, who comes frequently before us in the foreign news, is Charles XII of Sweden, who, after his escape from the Turks, had commenced an insane war with Norway, where he slaughtered and plundered, and played the madman for several years, until he was finally shot through the head one quiet evening by a ball from a small cannon, fired from the fort of Frederickshall after the operations of the day were over. A more respectable freebooter than the royal Swede is our old friend Rob Roy, who comes before us several times. We have him in January, marching into Fife with some 140 of his banditti, and taking possession of Falkland. We catch occasional glimpses of him afterwards, and finally he marches on to the scene in June, at the head of fifty of the clan Macgregor—

"well armed, and went straight to the Duke of Argyle's house, where Colonel Campbell of Finab received him at the head of a company of his grace's men under arms; and Robert Roy drew up hard by him, and, after exercising his men a little, grounded his arms, and quitted them with a Huzzah! and God save King George. Colonel Campbell gathered up the arms, and carried them into his grace's house, where Robert Roy and his men were well entertained for the rest of the day, and the next morning they were allowed to go home to their houses, where they now are both peaceably and publicly: And it's reported that Robert Roy will suddenly be made the Duke of Argyle's forester. It's also reported that he hath deserved some favour of his grace and the government by secret services."

O fie, Rob!

But we are warned that we have picked a good handful of plums out of this old Stamford pudding, and must cut short our piracies, having but small space remaining. Before concluding we must just

take a glance at the rate of mortality, and at the prices of provisions in England about 160 years ago. The death rate at that time in London, as far as we can make out, fully bears out the assertion of Macaulay, being about double what it is now—the burials averaging five hundred a week in a population not much more than a sixth of what it is at the present time. The bills of mortality, at least as we have them here, are but scant and meagre documents, and inform us of nothing so much as of the indifference or ignorance of those who drew them up. There are diseases in the list of which one never hears now, such as "rising of the lights" "head-moldshot," "horseshoehead," etc. The deaths from convulsions are set down at four times as many as those from any other single cause—a fact testifying loudly to the general absence of anything like medical science. Sometimes a full third of the deaths of the week are attributed to convulsion! Still more strange; among the casualties are put down those executed by the finisher of the law, as if people were hanged by accident!

The prices of provisions varied considerably in different parts of the country—a state of things inevitable in the then condition of the roads and the general absence of the means of conveyance. Wheat ranged from 25s. a quarter in the midland districts, to as high as 40s. in other places; barley was about half the price of wheat; and oats were some ten per cent. less than barley. Butter was 20s. to 28s. a firkin; Cheshire cheese was 3d. a pound; coffee, roasted, 6s. a pound, and raw about 4s. 8d. Coals, in the Pool at London, were about a guinea the chaldron.

#### OUR IRON ROADS.

##### VII.—COST OF CONSTRUCTION—WORKING EXPENDITURE—DIVIDENDS.

THE money which has been wasted in the formation of railways has been roughly estimated at £12,000,000 to £15,000,000. This has arisen from a variety of causes, principally, perhaps, the enormous demands made as the price of land through which lines have had to pass, and the reckless contests waged with opponents to many of the proposed schemes. In obtaining the necessary Acts, the amounts paid for parliamentary and legal expenses have also been immense. The following are a few examples:—

Bristol and Exeter about . . . .	£18,000
Great Western . . . . .	89,000
Great Northern . . . . .	434,000

It is said that the solicitor's bill of the original South-Eastern Company contained ten thousand folios, and amounted to £240,000.

The cost of construction varies very much in different parts of the country. The average outlay per mile amounts to £35,000. In Ireland the average cost has been about £10,000, in Scotland £18,000. The following figures show the cost per mile of a few of the English Companies:—

London, Brighton, and South Coast . .	£37,000
South-Eastern . . . . .	58,000
Midland . . . . .	43,000
North-Eastern . . . . .	31,000
London, Chatham, and Dover . . . .	129,000
Metropolitan . . . . .	922,000



Such large expenditures are in a great measure accounted for by the magnitude and difficulty of the undertakings, but in favourable situations lines have been made at the rate of £10,000 per mile. For instance, the Northampton and Peterborough line, forty-seven miles in length, cost £429,409. The line of forty-two miles from York to Scarborough was constructed at a cost of £6,000 per mile.

The total working expenditure of the railways of the United Kingdom amounted in 1871 to £23,152,860, or about forty-seven per cent. of the receipts. Some of the principal items which go to make up this amount are as follows:—

Maintenance and renewal of way and works . . .	£4,457,625
Locomotive power . . . . .	5,933,489
Traffic charges . . . . .	6,658,080
Rates and taxes . . . . .	953,753
Legal and parliamentary expenses . . . . .	251,980
Government duty . . . . .	520,555
Compensation for damage and loss of goods . . .	141,283

As compensation for personal injury the companies paid £312,334, the result of accidents and collisions. Had such a sum been expended in improving the working arrangements, it is more than probable that many of the accidents for which the companies had to pay so heavily might have been averted. Rightly managed, railways ought to be a lucrative mode of investment. Previous to the great mania of 1845 the success of railways was most assuring. The temptation to investors was so great that speculation in railway property was almost universal, and the reaction of 1846 was the result. Before this came about, the Liverpool and Manchester, London and Birmingham, and other companies, paid dividends at the rate of ten per cent. per year, while the Stockton and Darlington paid fifteen per cent. Such, however, was the effect of the crisis referred to, that the shares of the strongest companies were subjected to a rapid fall, as will be seen from the following:—

	Original Price.	Jan., 1845.	April, 1848.
Eastern Counties . . . . .	14½	17½	13
London and North-Western . . . . .	100	233	126
Midland . . . . .	100	123½	95

The following figures, showing the dividends paid by some of the principal companies in 1862 and 1872, will no doubt be of interest:—

	1862.	1872.
London and North-Western . . . . .	3½	7
Great Northern . . . . .	4½	6
Midland . . . . .	5½	7
North-Eastern . . . . .	4½	8½
Great Eastern . . . . .	nil	0½
Great Western . . . . .	0½	5½

#### VIII.—RAILWAY STATISTICS.

A short reference to the immense traffic on our railways will be sufficient to convey an idea as to their rapid progress, the work which is being done by them, and the employment of industry which they afford.

The following extract from the returns will indicate the growth of the system in twenty years.

	Length of Line open—Miles.	Receipts from all sources.	Per Mile of Line open.	Per Train per Mile.
1850 . . . . .	6,621	£13,204,669	£1,994	—
1860 . . . . .	10,433	27,766,622	2,661	5s. 5d.
1870 . . . . .	15,537	45,078,143	2,794	5s. 1½d.

With regard to the present status of our railways, the returns for 1871 furnish the following statements, which are worthy of perusal:—

Authorised capital . . . . .	£615,726,890
Total number of passengers . . . . .	375,220,754
Holders of season tickets, additional . . . . .	188,392
Number of miles travelled by all the trains . . . . .	179,075,894
Receipts from passengers . . . . .	£18,216,578
Receipts from excess luggage, parcels, carriages, horses, dogs, etc. . . . .	£1,806,802
Mails . . . . .	£599,200
Receipts from goods traffic . . . . .	£26,484,978
Total from all sources . . . . .	£48,892,780
Total working expenditure . . . . .	£23,152,860

In 1871 the rolling-stock consisted of—

Locomotives . . . . .	10,490
Carriages for the conveyance of passengers . . . . .	22,273
Other vehicles, i.e., carriage trucks, horse-boxes, etc. . . . .	8,263
Waggons for merchandise and live-stock . . . . .	275,453
Sundry carriages and waggons . . . . .	5,438
Total . . . . .	321,917

The traffic on the Metropolitan line is enormous. During one week of the Christmas holidays, 1870, about a million passengers were carried. No less than 200,000 passengers have during a holiday time been conveyed on this line in a single day. In 1871 the number of passengers conveyed by the Metropolitan, including the "Metropolitan and St. John's Wood," "Metropolitan District," and half the "Hammersmith and City Junction" railways, reached the enormous total of 54,606,060, besides 18,264 holders of season tickets.

As an instance of the capacity of the large railway companies in London, it may be remarked that in about four hours 30,000 passengers have been taken from the Crystal Palace on a fête day, without accident of any kind. This gives an idea of the facility of our railways for transferring a large army from one part of the country to another.

It will give an idea of the traffic at Ludgate Hill, when it is stated that in 1871 eight millions of passengers made use of that station. The weight of coal conveyed to the metropolis is remarkable. In the month of February, 1871, for instance, this amounted to 728,611 tons by three of our great railways alone. An analysis of the fish supply shows that in 1871 no less than 72,386 tons arrived in London by railway.

A parliamentary return of the railway accidents in 1871 shows that during that year 404 persons were killed, and 1,261 injured on the railways in the United Kingdom. As compared with 1870 the increase in the number of killed is 118. It is stated that in 1871 the number of persons killed, owing to the fault of the company, was 72, while in 1870 the number was 66. Among trespassers 44 lost their lives in 1870, compared with 77 in 1871. One more person committed suicide in 1871 than in 1870, the number being 16 and 15 respectively. Of the former, fourteen took place in England, and two in Scotland. These statistics are most startling, but in proportion to the number who use our railways the mortality is far lower than in the good old days when prudent men made their will before starting on a long journey by coach.

#### IX.—RAILWAY TICKETS.

When iron roads were in their infancy the ticket system was a most cumbersome one; every passenger was supplied with a paper ticket, upon which the booking clerk had to write the date and name of the station, at the same time retaining a counterpart of

such ticket to enable him to keep a correct account of the money taken. The system now in use was invented many years ago by Thomas Edmondson, who was employed at a station on the Newcastle and Carlisle line. In the course of his duties he found it very irksome to have to write on every ticket he delivered, and perceived how much time and trouble might be saved by the use of some mechanical method. One day as he was walking in a field in Northumberland, the idea struck him how tickets might be printed with the names of stations, the class of carriage, and consecutive numbers in one uniform arrangement, and he soon set to work to carry out the invention. A machine was constructed for the manufacture of the tickets, and the mode of production is so easy that with a pair of hands two or three hundred tickets per minute can be printed.

Having thus referred to the origin of the existing system, it will not be out of place to observe how the tickets are dealt with by the several officials through whose hands they pass. At the head-quarters of each company it is of course necessary to keep a sufficient store to supply the wants of every station. At stated periods the clerks in charge of stations send a requisition for such tickets as will enable them to meet every requirement of passengers. These tickets are numbered from 0 to 10,000, and are sorted with the utmost care. As the booking clerk has to account for every ticket as so much money, it will readily be understood with what vigilance the tickets have to be counted, and how necessary it is to watch lest any of the stock should be misplaced. A general stock of tickets is placed in drawers according to their consecutive numbers, while those for immediate use are placed in cases containing a number of compartments in the order of stations and classes, the lowest number being placed at the bottom. The compartments are placed in rows, or subdivisions, and under each row a piece of slate is fixed on which is inserted the number of the ticket next to be issued. The bottom ticket in each compartment is made to project, so that after the departure of any train the clerk can see at a glance to what stations tickets have been issued. When the booking for a train has been completed, the names of the stations to which passengers have booked are written in a book, and the numbers are arrived at by deducting the numbers on the slates from the next numbers to be issued. At the expiration of every month a return of all tickets sold has to be sent to the accountant's department. In order that this return may be correctly made out, a record is taken of the next or closing numbers of the tickets to be issued on the last day of every month, and these figures are the commencing numbers for the next account. For instance, suppose that on the morning of the 1st of July the next third-class ticket to be issued from London to Leeds is number 500. If on referring to the number again, July 31, it is 950, it follows that 450 tickets have been issued. The tickets are far from being done with, however, when they are given up by the passengers to the collectors; they have yet to perform an important part in the settlement of railway accounts. At the close of every day all the tickets collected have to be arranged according to their respective numbers and stations, and are then sent to the head-quarters of the company for examination. These are compared with the return of tickets issued, and should one be missing an explanation is at once asked for. Those tickets, moreover,

which have been used for travelling on more than two companies' lines, have to be forwarded to the railway clearing-house (to which reference will be made in a subsequent chapter), so that the proportion of the fare due to each may be duly allotted. A plan has recently been adopted at many important stations of impressing on the tickets certain numbers when they are examined by collectors, to denote the route by which the passenger has travelled. For instance, at the London and North-Western station, Rugby, the figure 2 is used; at Shrewsbury, 4; at the Midland station, Gloucester, 19; Derby, 22; and so on.

## Varieties.

**WORDSWORTH'S OPINION OF HIMSELF.**—Wordsworth spoke of Byron's plagiarisms from him:—The whole third canto of "Childe Harold" founded on his style and sentiments; the feeling of natural objects which is there expressed not caught by Byron from nature herself, but from him (Wordsworth), and spoiled in the transmission, "Tintern Abbey" the source of it all;—from which same poem, too, the celebrated passage about "Solitude," in the first canto of "Childe Harold," is he said, taken, with this difference, that what is naturally expressed by him, has been worked by Byron into a laboured and antithetical sort of declamation. . . . Lady Davy told us that once, in a large party, Wordsworth, without anything having been said previously that could lead to the subject, called out suddenly from the top of the table to the bottom, in his most epic tone, "Davy!" and on Sir Humphrey putting forth his head in awful expectation of what was coming, said, "Do you know the reason why I published the 'White Doe' in quarto?" "No, what was it?" "To show the world my opinion of it."—*Memoirs of Thomas Moore.*

**DEFOE ON ENGLISH WORKING-MEN.**—"There is nothing more frequent than for an Englishman to work till he has got his pocket full of money, and then go and idle, and perhaps drink, till all's gone, and perhaps himself in debt; and ask him in his cups what he intends, he'll tell you honestly he'll drink as long as it lasts, and then go and work for more."

**MR. GROTE'S BIOGRAPHER.**—"What are you so busy over, there, H.?" inquired he. "Well, I am arranging some materials for a sketch of your life, which I have been urgently invited to write by several of our best friends." "My life!" exclaimed Mr. Grote, "why, there is absolutely nothing to tell." "Not in the way of adventures, I grant; but there is something, nevertheless; your life is the history of a mind." "That is it!" he rejoined, with animation; "but, can you tell it?" "It is what I intend to try. You see, unless I give some account of your youth and early manhood, no other hand can furnish the least information concerning it." "Nothing can be more certain—you are the only person living who knows anything about me during the first half of my existence." This short colloquy ended, the subject was never renewed between us; the historian feeling, as I believe, content to leave his life's story in my hands."—*Memoir of George Grote by Mrs. Grote.*

**HENRY KIRKE WHITE'S MONUMENT BY CHANTREY.**—A correspondent at Cambridge writes:—"About ten years ago the old parish church of All Saints was pulled down at the instigation of the late Dr. Whewell, as it was an eyesore to the hostel of Trinity College, which he built and endowed. On the destruction of the church all the tombstones in the churchyard were laid down flat, and a wooden shed, like a dog kennel, erected on the site of the chancel of the old church, in which were deposited and where still remain the monuments taken down from the interior of the old church. The monument of Kirke White by Chantrey was removed by one of the churchwardens, Mr. H. M. Ransom, to his yard for better security, but it was never placed in the new parish church, nor left exposed, as was affirmed by a writer in the 'Standard' last year. A short time ago the authorities of St. John's College, of which White was a member, applied to have it placed in their new chapel, and the consent of the various parties being obtained, their request was acceded to, and it is now erected there. It is in an excellent state of preservation."—*J. W. C.*"

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